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The Role of Media in Elections



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Definition

- Objectively and equally cover what candidates are saying
- Monitor election's transparency and highlight breaches



- The media is supposed to maintain equal distance towards all parties in order to correctly exercise its role as a critical observer of the electoral process.
- Provide educational content about elections.
- Be an open space available to all candidates equally and without exception



- Allow all candidates to present their platforms
- Avoid supporting a specific candidate, list or block
- Media outlets should allocate specific and equal time slots or spaces for all candidates to ensure pluralism and equality



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- Educate the voters on how to exercise their democratic rights.
- Programmes should target traditionally disadvantaged groups.
- Report on the development of the election campaign.
- Provide a platform for political parties to communicate their message to the electorate.
- Paid media content should be available to all candidates at equal, pre-announced prices.



- Allow the parties to debate with each other.
- Report results and monitor vote counting.
- Scrutinize the electoral process itself in order to evaluate its fairness, efficiency, and probity



- Refrain from any act of libel, slander and defamation towards any list or candidate.
- Refrain from broadcasting anything that might trigger religious, confessional, ethnic sensitivities or acts of violence or riots or support for terrorism, crime or sabotage.
- Refrain from broadcasting anything that might be a means of pressure, intimidation, mistrust, allusion or promise of material or in-kind benefits.
- Refrain from distorting, framing, falsifying, omitting, or misrepresenting information.



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Media outlets' rights

- Freedom from censorship
- Freedom from arbitrary attack or interference
- Free access to necessary information
- Pluralism of voices in the media



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- Media should be exempt from legal liability for provocative statements and a right of reply should be provided



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Role of Journalists

- Be accurate verified, balanced, neutral and respectful of human dignity.
- Avoid misleading voters
- Resist the pressures of their own opinions
- Respect the privacy of the voting stations
- Remain above the political fray



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- Treat all candidates impartially
- Resist pressure or temptations
- Able to understand opposing points of view
- Keep in mind that a journalist's primary responsibility is to his fellow citizens



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Rights of Journalists

- Journalists must be able to perform their jobs safely.
- Journalists must be protected from threats
- Journalists should be able to speak with every candidate regardless of political affiliation, gender, religion, or ethnicity
- Journalists should be able to expose attempts to hinder freedom of expression.



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Candidates and Media

- Avoid using their owned media outlets for their own publicity
- Avoid abusing, threatening, or tempting journalists
- Avoid usage of libel, slander and defamation
- Avoid using media to convey hate speech
- Respect the laws and guidelines of usage of media outlets



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Candidates and Media

- In case of being government officials candidates should provide clear distinction between news coverage of functions of government office and functions as a candidate



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“A free and independent press is a cornerstone of democracy, as it helps promote political debate and keeps government accountable to an informed citizenry. A free press is also crucial for credible elections, as it fosters the free exchange of ideas and provides information on the electoral process. This includes political parties, candidates and their platforms.”

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